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## Letter dated 28 June 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to write to express Rwanda's concerns arising from the presidential statement of 22 June 2004 on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/PRST/2004/21).

Upon reading the presidential statement of 22 June 2004 on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda feels that the Security Council is falling prey to the deliberate disinformation campaign orchestrated by the drafter of the statement and some officials in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. We therefore wish to share with you the following information with the hope that it would correct the misrepresentation of the situation that is transparent in the recent presidential statement.

On 28 May 2004, two days after the outbreak of the fighting in Bukavu, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo visited Rwanda and met his counterpart and H.E. Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Rwandese Republic. The purpose of the visit was to convey a message from H.E. Mr. Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and his Government that the events in Bukavu were of an internal nature and were the result of indiscipline in the army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, as such, did not threaten the security of Rwanda. He added that the likelihood of the crisis spilling over to Rwanda was very low and that Rwanda should therefore not worry.

Rwanda welcomed the message and promised that it would not involve itself in the crisis and would even refrain from commenting on it. We further promised that if any soldiers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were to cross the border, we should immediately disarm them and put them at the disposal of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We did as we promised.

When on 2 June 2004 the events in Bukavu turned the way the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had not predicted and General Mbuza Mabe, the commander of the 10th Military Region, was chased out of the city, Rwanda was shocked by President Kabila's allegations that "units of the Rwandan Army crossed the border and captured Bukavu". President Kabila then called for "a general mobilization of human, military, logistic and diplomatic resources to fight this new aggression by Rwanda".

Following this call for a general mobilization to fight this "psuedo-new aggression by Rwanda", the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has massively

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deployed forces in Beni, Kisangani, Uvira, Kalemie and Kindu, and in coordination with the ex-FAR/INTERAHAMWE, these forces are moving towards our shared border.

Rwanda reiterates that fact that its armed forces were not involved in the fall of Bukavu and that the officers and soldiers involved in the events in Bukavu were all Congolese, despite the fact that some of them speak the language used in Rwanda. Therefore this declaration or war against Rwanda, wrongly premised on the so-called involvement of Rwandan troops in the Bukavu crisis, must have other undeclared motivations.

Rwanda has called on any international organization interested in knowing the truth about those allegations to come and carry out an investigation, arrest and otherwise deal with members of Rwanda's Armed Forces allegedly present on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To facilitate this investigation we have closed the border between the two countries.

Rwanda is therefore disappointed by the language used in the presidential statement of 22 June 2004 insinuating its involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, instead of responding to its legitimate worries caused by the false accusations followed by the war declaration and war preparations against it by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rwanda is also disappointed by the fact that the presidential statement of 22 June 2004 makes no mention of the issue of ex-FAR/INTERAHAMWE, despite the fact that they constitute the single most dangerous armed group operating on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the biggest menace to the peace and security of the region. May I recall that these forces left Rwanda after committing the mother of all crimes against humanity, i.e., genocide, and took refuge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where they reorganized, retrained and rearmed and have been launching attacks on Rwanda? Our repeated appeals to the United Nations Security Council to disarm these forces have fallen on deaf ears, except a timid call for their voluntary disarmament.

I also wish to take this opportunity to clear up a misrepresentation made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations about Rwanda's understanding of the suggested joint verification mechanism to be established between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

You would recall that the idea of establishing a joint verification mechanism between Rwanda and the Democratic of the Congo was agreed upon during the summit of the two Heads of State held in Pretoria on 27 November 2003 in the presence of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and President Joachim Chissano of Mozambique. This joint mechanism was to replace the Third Party Verification Mechanism charged with the responsibility of verifying, on one hand, that Rwanda has withdrawn all its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, on the other hand, that the Democratic Republic of the Congo has tracked down, disarmed, demobilized and repatriated all the ex-FAR/INTERAHAMWE present on its territory. It was further agreed that this joint mechanism would benefit from the assistance of the African Union and the support of the United Nations.

I therefore wish to reject the report by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations according to which Rwanda is only interested in the verification of the presence of ex-FAR/INTERAHAMWE in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The agreed upon mechanism, and this is the position of the Rwandan Government, should verify the

thorough implementation of the Pretoria Agreement. It should therefore establish, on one hand, that not a single soldier of the Rwandan Army is still or has crossed back illegally in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and, on the other hand, that all the ex-FAR/INTERAHAMWE present on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are disarmed, demobilized, repatriated, resettled and rehabilitated.

To further clear up any misunderstanding, I wish to share the following with you. In the night of 15 June 2004, my Minister for Foreign Affairs received a telephone call from Ambassador William Swing, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, informing him that President Kabila had finally given his go-ahead for the establishment of the bilateral verification mechanism.

The Government of Rwanda, which had, since November 2003, prepared a draft working document on the structure and functioning of the mechanism as agreed upon in the Pretoria summit, sent that draft proposal to Ambassador William Swing requesting him to share it with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and stating its readiness to meet and discuss the proposal. However, the same day Ambassador William Swing sent a draft proposal of terms of reference of what, in his view, the mechanism would look like.

It is our understanding that the verification mechanism to be put in place is a joint or bilateral one between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Therefore Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo will have to discuss and agree on the tasks, structure, composition, functioning and reporting of the mechanism. Rwanda has simply made a proposal and would welcome any input or counterproposal from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and is also ready to meet a delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo at any location selected by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to discuss and agree on the mechanism. It is our humble view that the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) could better help in this exercise of putting the mechanism in place by facilitating a meeting of the key players in this, i.e., the Governments of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, let me reiterate that it is rather Rwanda which eagerly desires to see the mechanism in place and fully functional. Indeed it is only Rwanda which suffers from baseless allegations and rumours that unfortunately abound in our part of the world, because there are a lot of clients for them. Worse still and contrary to the universally accepted principle of justice, when it comes to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council tends to consider Rwanda guilty until proven innocent!

We request that the present letter be circulated to all members of the Security Council as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Stanislas **Kamanzi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative